

THE GRAND GETAWAY

By A. H. C. MITCHELL

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(Continued from last week)

CHAPTER XIV The Deserted Cabin.

If you should happen to be paddling on a calm and peaceful day, in that part of Oceanica known as the Low Archipelago, particularly the western part, it is possible you may sight a small, partly wooded island of not more than fifty acres.

If your approach from the north you will hardly fail to notice that the island ends as smoothly and as rounding as a woman's chin. You will also observe that close to the dazzling beach, tall palms in grotesque postures, bend to the breezes.

If you would circumnavigate this island beware the black reefs that stretch out from the southeastern shore. If you would land you are safe in doing so except in the neighborhood of the reefs and if your eye is keen you will discover an inlet that will make everything easy.

It was nearly a week after they first saw land that the Carteret boys and Hemenway and Lent and McDonald on the rechristened Wauna sighted this island.

Hemenway had won his point, and instead of going ashore at the first island they came to, which was one of some magnitude, they sheered off and gave it a wide berth. After that they viewed from a distance several other islands, big and little, which for one reason or another they passed up as undesirable.

Finally they picked another that looked like a pinhead on the chart and needed for it and so we find them early one morning lazily approaching this small partly wooded island whose northern boundary was as smooth and as round as a woman's chin.

A breeze that barely ruffled the water propelled them slowly toward it. All hands gazed with interest at the shiny beach over which the lazy rollers broke, and at the palms overhead almost motionless in the bright morning sun.

There did not seem to be a place to land. They did not want to anchor out, of course. They were looking for a lagoon, a shelter of some kind. They neared the island from the east. To the south the treacherous reefs were plainly discernible.

They decided to try the other way around. Half a mile from shore the yacht's head was turned north and she crept along and around the "woman's chin" and then up the western shore. The solitary pair of marine glasses the yacht boasted was passed from hand to hand in vain search for an inlet. It was not until they were half way up the western coast that McDonald exclaimed:

"I see something that looks like the mouth of a little river, but we've passed it."

They all made a grab for the glasses but Hemenway got there first.

"You're right Dennis, let's make for it."

After the twins had taken a look the yacht was swung around and headed toward the mouth of the "little river." Caution forbade them going closer than a quarter of a mile of it, so the Wauna was brought up into the wind and preparations were made for lowering the launch.

McDonald and Hemenway were the only ones aboard familiar with the running of a motor boat, so these two got aboard and the launch was lowered in the water.

Casting off the tackle blocks McDonald gave a twist of the fly-wheel and the launch was off in a jiffy. In a short time the mouth of the river seemed to those on board the yacht to have swallowed the launch. At any rate the little boat disappeared from view and was gone so long the twins grew apprehensive. Then minutes later the launch was seen issuing from the shore, Hemenway wildly waving his arms. As soon as he got within hail distance he yelled:

"Made to order. Give us a line and we'll tow you in."

"Not so fast, not so fast, young man," observed George as soon as the little boat came alongside. "You just come aboard and lend a hand with these sails before there will be any towing done."

"I hate to waste the time," laughed Hemenway as he scrambled aboard the yacht.

"What's the place like," asked Jim.

"Wait till you see. Fine anchorage; if you don't believe it take a trip with Dennis and look it over."

"Think it's all right, Dennis?" asked Jim.

"Surest thing you know," replied the detective.

"All right; what do you say, George, take a chance?"

"I guess so. Come aboard Dennis and help roll up these sails."

Half an hour later, with everything snug, Hemenway and McDonald again boarded the launch. A tow line was passed down to them and the pro-

cession got under way. The launch headed for the mouth of the river and steered boldly into it.

The little "river" as McDonald had described it was not more than fifty feet wide at the mouth, and in less than two hundred feet inland narrowed to thirty feet.

To George who was in the bow of the schooner acting as pilot while his brother took the wheel, it appeared as though the inlet ended right ahead of them and that the schooner would run aground in less than three minutes.

"What are these fools thinking of to bring us into this swimming tank," he muttered. He was on the point of yelling to Hemenway to stop the launch when suddenly the tender bore off to starboard and rounded a sharp bend in the "river." An instant later George saw a lagoon opening up fifty feet ahead.

"Hard aport!" he yelled. "Hard aport," repeated Jim and the yacht swung to starboard around the bend and was soon in a little pear-shaped body of water of not more than four hundred feet at its greatest width.

McDonald's "river" was like the crooked stem of the pear. The motor boat shut off power and the two vessels floated for a while in the most intense quietness any of the persons on board ever experienced.

In the middle of the lagoon they dropped anchor in about three fathoms of water.

"Can you beat it!" shouted Hemenway from the launch.

They all took a good look around. The lagoon was completely encircled by a growth of palms and underbrush. Owing to the bend in the "river" the ocean was hidden from view.

There was no sign of habitation. No one appeared to welcome them, nor was there any one to demand their business and order them away. It was a good guess the island was deserted. No breeze ruffled the surface of the lagoon. It suddenly occurred to everybody that the weather was infernally hot.

"I move we explore this place right away," declared Jim. "I see some planks stacked on the beach over there and that's where we will land."

Forthwith they tumbled into the launch and ran it up on the beach. There were a dozen long two inch boards of hardwood piled up behind which were four boxlike affairs. In the end of these were fastened two by four uprights with holes bored near the top. Four iron bars about the size of crowbars and a pile of stones completed the outfit. Jim examined it critically.

"Now I know what this is," he said. "It is a portable wharf. Somebody lives here or has lived here, else why should there be this wharf. A tidy person evidently. Everything piled up shipshape. If the landing place was here there must be a path or road leading from it. Ah, here we have it," and Jim led the way to a path through the bushes.

The winding path led on rising ground and as the brush only fringed the lagoon they were soon through it. Coming out into the open they saw, not more than four hundred feet away in the center of the grove of red-white coco palms, a long, low house. The five men hastened toward it.

A broad porch extended around three sides of the house which faced the east. Windows and doors were closed. The men rushed on the porch. "Hold on, let's be polite," said Hemenway. He strode to the door and knocked. No answer. He tried the door. It opened and they all went in. They entered a large bare room, the only article of furniture visible being a big table in the center of the room. On it were several well thumbed American magazines whose dates showed they were more than a year old.

There was only one room in the house, but there was a little extension in the rear which was used as a kitchen. It contained a stove, and over it one corner was a pump with a chute leading outside through a hole sawed through the boards. They tried the pump, but it only sucked air.

"Needs priming," said George, bringing a bucket. Bring a broom too. This place looks good to me."

They threw open all the windows and looked around some more. Above on the rafters were piled half a dozen single folding cots and the same number of reclining chairs made of light wood, and a strip of canvas. Hemenway jumped on the table and passed them down.

"I told you this place was made to order for us. Now aren't you glad you followed my advice?" he chirped. "I tell you we five men are the luckiest five men outside of jail."

More nosing around failed to bring anything else worthy of note to light except this: Tacked to the inside of the front door were two sheets of foolscap on which was written in four languages—English, French, German and Spanish—the following:

Little North America.
John O. Morgan, Sole proprietor.
1—Please leave things as you find them.

2—Please close the doors and windows when you leave.

3—If this isn't satisfactory you are hard to suit.

"A man of education and some wit," observed George, "and I take it, an American. Mr. Morgan we accept your kind invitation to tarry a while."

Without stopping to explore the island they put in a day and a half of hard work. They rigged up the wharf and warped the schooner up to it. They found they could get the bow of the vessel about twenty feet ashore

from the end of the wharf at low tide.

They carried a generous supply of stores and their bedding up to the house, and hastily, after infinite toil with block and tackle and guy ropes, they succeeded in hoisting the piano to the wharf and thence by delicate maneuvering to the shore where they picked it up and carried it the rest of the way to the house.

Then they anchored the schooner in the middle of the lagoon once more, rigged moorings for the launch just clear of the wharf, and came ashore in the dingy which they hauled high and dry on the beach. At last, thoroughly tired they drew chairs to the front of the porch where a cooling breeze blew in their faces.

"Gentlemen, be seated," said Hemenway.

CHAPTER XV Wrecked on the Reef

At five o'clock next morning there were sounds of revelry in the little habitation. It was Jim Carteret at the piano trying an opening chorus he had dreamed out during the long voyage from San Francisco.

Snoring ceased at once and from four cots came muffled protests. Hemenway sat on the edge of his bed and rubbed his eyes.

"You certainly can punish that piano in true artistic style, Jim, but is this to be the program every morning?"

"Why not?" replied Jim. "All hands on deck at five o'clock and finish breakfast at six. Then George and I will keep busy with our work and you fellows can amuse yourselves as you see fit."

After breakfast Hemenway, Lent, and McDonald started along the beach to make a circuit of the island. In doing so they discovered why John Morgan called it Little North America. The island was a regular vest pocket edition of its big namesake—if one cut out Hudson Bay, cut Panama at the canal and bent the end close around to Florida.

The lagoon in the little island represented the Gulf of Mexico and the little river was Florida Straits. The island was in truth a little North America upside down; that is to say, what was north in the real North America was south in the little imitation of it.

The three men walked around the island, starting from the narrow beach that lay not four hundred feet to the east of their house. Palms grew almost to the water's edge. They figured the island to be less than a mile in circumference.

In the cool of the evening they brought buckets from the yacht and carried out enough water to fill the tank of the vessel. It was well to be prepared for any emergency.

That night Hemenway moved his cot to the porch and announced his intention of sleeping in the open air. When the others were sound asleep he carefully slipped out of bed, drew on his sneakers and trousers, and noiselessly made his way to the lagoon.

He launched the dingy and silently paddled out to the yacht. He worked steadily all night, making two trips to the shore and being careful to make no noise. It was evident he did not want his companions to know what he was doing. As dawn was breaking he slipped back to his cot.

The twins were busy with their opera as the days passed. Lent and McDonald developed a mania for cribbage and the gun shoe man sat for hours opposite his erstwhile prey. Hemenway soon grew tired of fishing. It was too easy. It was no trick at all to catch in ten minutes' time enough fish for a dozen meals.

He spent long hours in the neighborhood of the reefs, watching the surf break unceasingly over the black and jagged coral. All day long, whether the ocean was as smooth as glass or whether the trade wind ruffled the surface of the water, the element boiled and churned among the reefs.

The whole thing had a fascination for Hemenway. There in the shade of the palms he developed plans for the disposal of his stolen riches.

But why dispose of ready cash? Hemenway had figured all that out. While he was as safe where he was as though he were in another world, he knew the authorities were moving heaven and earth to run down the perpetrator of such a gigantic robbery.

His plan was to cover up: to sell his gold for a commodity, and sell the commodity for other gold. Being inexperienced in South Sea trading he figured he would lose by the transaction, but he decided he could afford to stand the loss.

Two weeks passed. One afternoon Hemenway slowly retraced his steps along the stretch of beach that separated the bungalow from the reefs. The twins had the big table out on the porch and were making funny little dots and lines and curlicues on sheets of ruled music paper. Lent and McDonald separated by a box of canned goods sat facing each other

with a deck of cards and an improvised cribbage board.

A gentle breeze blew from the southeast. Not a cloud obscured the sky. Hemenway drew a chair near the card players. The labor of the twins was unintelligible to him. McDonald pegged out, threw up his arms and yawned.

"You're easy Joe. Five straight; enough crib for today. Anybody making any other proposition?"

Jim coughed gently.

"Ahem," he remarked. "Since you urge me, Dennis, I'll just sing you a little song George and I have just finished for our masterpiece. Profes-

sor tickle the ivories please."

George picked up the manuscript and stepped to the piano. Jim cleared his throat and sang:

"It's a world of disappointment as everybody knows,
And nothing ever happens as it should.

The deliberate conviction continually grows
That nothing would or wouldn't if it could.

Your sweethearts say they'll love....
"Hey! What's that!" exclaimed McDonald jumping up suddenly. The music ceased.

"Looks to me like a sail ho," replied Hemenway rushing indoors for the glasses. "And that's what it is," he added after a squint.

They all took a look. Away off to the east was a tiny speck, a small vessel. It was headed for the island. They watched it creep toward them. Those on board didn't know the island, for half a mile out they began to heave the lead.

They ran out fathoms of lead line without finding bottom, so continued to stand in and finally let go and anchor less than a furlong off shore. The vessel was a small schooner of the old fashioned type not more than fifty feet over all.

A small boat was sent overboard and into it was put a cask and several buckets. Three men got in the boat and rowed toward shore.

"We better go down on the beach and see what they want," said Jim, laying down the glasses.

They all hurried down to the shore and yelled. The boat's head was turned toward them and soon it ran through the lazy breakers and grounded in the sand.

"Howdy, strangers! What's the trouble?" was Hemenway's greeting.

The three men that stepped out of the boat were villainous looking characters. One, who seemed to be the leader, was a tall stoop-shouldered man with a sharp nose, a reddish mustache which drooped downward and a small goatee. His eyes were roving, and bloodshot.

Of his companions one was a big, brutish looking fellow, smooth shaven with thick lips, flat nose and dull eyes. The other man was short and bulky, with black whiskers, shifty, cunning eyes and hands like hams.

Altogether they looked like very undesirable citizens.

"Short of water, got any?" said the tall man in answer to Hemenway's question. He had a deep, powerful voice.

"Sure, come with us," said Hemenway.

"Get the buckets, Bill, you and Hawkins," ordered the tall man.

They made their way up the incline toward the house. The wind had flattened to nothing and the air grew close and heavy.

"Get a move on, Bill, I don't like the smell of this weather," said the tall man. "Where's your water?" to Hemenway.

They entered the house and Hemenway led the way to the pump. The tall man cast a sweeping glance over the big room as they passed through it. He grasped the pump handle.

"Look alive now men," he cried. "We got six buckets and it takes twenty-four to fill that cask. Shake a leg, Bill. Now then Hawkins, where's your two."

He talked fast and worked fast as he talked. Grabbing his own filled buckets he walked rapidly out of the house. Stepping off the porch he peered through the palms over the ocean.

"Har!" he exclaimed, dropping his buckets and falling on his knees to get a better view of the horizon. "It's comin'!" Springing to his feet he ran swiftly to the beach, followed by the wondering household.

Once clear of the palms they quickly saw the cause of the tall man's agitation. Coming down on them from the northeast was one of those sudden and savage white squalls that seem to spring from nowhere and hurry quickly onward leaving devastation in their wake. They could see in the distance the wide streak of seething, angry foam as it came toward them.

The air began to stir. Little whirlwinds picked up loose sand and scattered it again. The air became filled with broken twigs, leaves, sand, and the refuse of the beach.

"Let's get back Jim," yelled George, "all our stuff is on the porch."

They raced for the house none too soon. The shortblack whiskered man came running up.

"Too late Tyler, I wouldn't take a farthing for 'er chances."

For reply the tall man bellowed a string of oaths that were terribly to hear. All hands turned to look at the little schooner. She had been riding quietly at her anchor, the rope cable hanging limply from the hawsehole.

Suddenly she began to spin around and around, finally bringing up to her anchor with a terrific jerk. Again the little schooner whirled around and again came the terrific jerk at the anchor.

This time the cable parted like rotten twine.

At the same instant the fury of the squall broke full on her beam. She heeled until her spreaders almost touched the water and without righting was carried swiftly toward the pitiless reefs, now a seething caldron.

Tyler, the tall man, shouted curses that rose above the roar of the elements. Big waves broke on the short beach and drove them to higher land, but they could not take their eyes off the helpless little schooner.

It seemed but an instant before she struck the reef. Then followed a tremendous wave that lifted her as

though she were a chip and hurled her into the mass of foam and coral.

In five minutes she was beaten to pieces and everything pertaining to her that could float was carried off to leeward.

Ten minutes later the ocean slept again.

CHAPTER XVI Battle on the Beach

There was serious trouble right off the reel. It came in bunches and it came swiftly. As soon as the squall had passed, Hemenway and his companions hurried to the lagoon to ascertain how the yacht had ridden the storm.

Happily, they found the protection had been sufficient, and the Wauna rode at anchor as though a storm had not been within a thousand miles of her.

The three villainous looking men followed the other five to the lagoon. After sizing up the situation Tyler started the trouble.

"Now then, you young fellows get your stuff aboard and we'll start right away," he growled.

"What's that?" exclaimed Hemenway, flaring up. The tall man turned on him.

"You heard what I said. Shake a leg, now!" he roared with his wild eyes blazing. Hemenway bristled up like a bantam rooster.

"Not so fast; not so fast, cap'n I've got just a little to say about this. We leave this place when we are good and ready. Understand that?"

Tyler flew into a furious passion, raving and ranting and cursing a full two minutes.

"You've got a lovely disposition," remarked Hemenway when the tall man's streak of profanity had run its course.

"Keep your mouth shut, you shrimp or I'll knock your teeth down your throat!" cried Tyler. "I'm going aboard that schooner. Bill, get that boat in the water, you and Hawkins."

The eight men were on the narrow strip of beach that bordered on the lagoon. There was hardly room to turn around. Bill and Hawkins moved toward the dingy.

"Keep your hands off that boat!" thundered George Carteret.

"Stand back, you white livered Job!" yelled Tyler, still foaming with passion. He made a movement toward the big collegian.

The twins dashed past Tyler like end-rushers covering a punt, and were on top of his two companions in a twinkling.

"Out with your knives, men! Cut their hearts out!" roared Tyler, reaching for his sheath knife.

"That's your game is it?" snapped McDonald, poking a gun in the tall man's belt.

"Leave him to me; leave him to me; let him have his knife!" screamed Hemenway, pushing McDonald aside. Then, with incredible swiftness, he stooped and gathered two handfuls of fine, dry beach sand and as he arose he dashed the sand directly in the eyes of the tall man.

With a roar of pain Tyler shot his hands upward, and as he did so Hemenway kicked him full in the stomach. The man fell writhing to the ground. Without an instant's hesitation, Hemenway kicked him again in the same place with all the force he could put in his boot.

Then he jumped and came down with the full force of his knees on Tyler's body and began tearing at his throat. He bore down with all his strength on Tyler's windpipe, snarling like a wild animal.

"For God's sake, Archie, don't kill him!" cried McDonald. He came from behind and grasping Hemenway under the arms, pulled him off the inert form of Tyler. Hemenway struggled to free himself, but McDonald held tight.

Finally Hemenway became calm. He even grinned when he caught sight of the twins. George was sitting on the sand playing mumblety-peg with Hawkins's sheath knife, while Jim was rolling a cigarette.

Of the enemy Hawkins was flat on his back in the dingy, his legs hanging over the gunwale. He was knocked out and hadn't come to. Bill the big brute, was standing waist deep in the water, with Lent standing guard over him, revolver in hand.

"Wot ho, shipmates!" cried Hemenway, his good humor returning at sight of his friends. "Watchmen, wot of the night?"

"We beat 'em to it," replied Jim. "They didn't last a round. Before they could get their knives George landed a haymaker on my friend Hawkins, and the old scout took the count. He's taking it yet. I happened to catch Bill off his balance and staggered him with a punch."

"His legs became tangled and he flopped in the water. Before he could scramble to his feet Joe had him covered with a gun. That's all, Bill, toss your knife ashore, like a good fellow."

"Dennis, I didn't know you and Joe carried guns all the time," said Hemenway.

"I don't, but Joe does," replied the detective. "When I first got a good look at our guests I thought I better slip mine in my pocket. That's how I happened to have it with me."

"Look here, Archie, what kind of prize ring rules do you fight under?" inquired Jim.

Hemenway grinned. "Marquis of Dogberry. Can you blame me?" he replied. "A knife fighter is about as low down a cuss as they make 'em, and when a man pulls a knife on me I lose my aristocratic manner. Friendship ceases immediately."

"I'm afraid I lost my temper when

Old Sport Tyler began handing me compliments. Very fortunately, I had on my heavy shoes to rest my feet from those canvas sneakers. What do you think of these rummies, anyway? What'll we do with them?"

"I think your man is in a bad way," said Jim. "He hasn't moved since Dennis pulled you off."

"I kicked the wind out of him; that's all. He didn't have enough left when he got through swearing. He's a regular artist in that line."

"We better look him over and then decide what to do with the outfit," said George, arising to his feet. "Joe, keep your eye on those two gentlemen for a minute."

Tyler was beginning to show signs of life, and about the same time Hawkins pulled himself together and sat, blinking stupidly on a thwart of the dingy. Hemenway, McDonald and the twins thrashed out the problem before them and finally came to a decision.

McDonald passed his gun to Hemenway and sculled out the yacht in the dingy. There he collected the knives in the galley and returned to shore. Hemenway took possession of Tyler's knife saying:

"Come ashore Bill. You and Hawkins can take charge of the piece of cheese you call Tyler and drag him up to the house if he isn't able to get there under his own steam."

"We'll give you some water to swab out his eyes, and then we'll give you something to eat. After that you are to go down to the beach in plain view of the house and stay there until we get ready to dump you somewhere else."

"You are to keep together. You are not to wander beyond certain marks we will make on the beach, and under no circumstances are you to come toward the house. If you do, we will fill you full of lead without stopping to think twice about it. Now grab hold of Tyler and get him out of here."

The two villains pulled Tyler to his feet and supporting him, they made their way up the path to the house, followed by the other five men. There wasn't much ginger displayed by the castaways.

"Tyler," said Hemenway, "you don't look very chipper and you're not swearing as much as you were a while ago. I don't want to rub it in but before you quit this place I'm going to tell you what I think of you."

The tall man made no answer. At the house they fixed him up as best they could, and then gave them all something to eat. Between bites Bill and Hawkins told the young men that they were returning from an expedition, the nature of which they did not disclose, when they put in for water. Tyler professed to have owned the little schooner that was wrecked on the reefs. When she was lost the three lost all they possessed.

"Well, I'm sorry for you if that helps you any," said Hemenway; "but we don't trust you after what you tried to pull off a while ago. Go on down to the beach now. Keep together and as you value your life, don't try to come near this house."

The boys watched them walk slowly to the beach. It was agreed that the only thing to do was to keep watch on the villainous trio. They drew lots, and McDonald was elected to stand guard the first night, or until he got too sleepy when he was to awaken Lent to finish out until turning-out time.

At McDonald's suggestion, they lighted a lantern as night came on and placed it on the beach near the three men. McDonald then drew out his pipe and settled himself on the porch for a long night's vigil. Suddenly he thought of something. He said:

"Jim, I owe you an apology for interrupting your song this afternoon. Will you finish it now?"

"With pleasure," replied Jim, "and to show you there's no hard feelings, I'll play my own accompaniment." Seating himself at the piano he sang:

"...love you forever and a day.

But do they? Not at all; they never do;

Or else they swear they'll leave you forever, right away.

But they never, no, they never, never do.

They swear they will forever stay, Or else forever stay away.

But what's the difference what they say.

They never do.

"Fine! Great!" they all exclaimed. "Any more?"

"Sure," laughed Jim. "Second verse:

The clouds were dark and heavy and hung above Broadway,

The rain came down in towels and in sheets.

And women lifted dainty skirts....

"Hey! House ahoy!"

It was a summons from the beach. They all hurried down to where the three villains were clustered.

"Well, what's wanted?" demanded Hemenway.

It was Hawkins who replied.

"Got any chewin' tobacco?" he asked.

(Continued Next Week)

TELLS WHAT SHE THINKS

Anna Hawn, Cedar Grove, Mo., writes: "We think Foley Cathartic Tablets are the best liver pill we ever got hold of, as they